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C O N F I D E N T I A L MUSCAT 000701

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STATE FOR NEA/ARPI, IO

E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/03/2016

TAGS: OPDC PREL PHUM KUNR MU

SUBJECT: OMAN "SUPPORTS" IRAN CANDIDACY TO UN HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL

REF: A. STATE 68575

1B. STATE 66050

Classified By: Ambassador Gary A. Grappo. Reason: 1.4 (b, d).

SUMMARY

¶1. (C) Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs Sayyid Badr al-Busaidi indicated to Ambassador May 3 that Oman would support Iran's candidacy to the UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC) if Tehran runs for a seat. The Under Secretary believes that including Iran on the Council will prove to be an effective engagement strategy in the long-term. He lamented the USG decision not to seek a seat on the Council, noting that lack of USG participation will likely result in an ineffective body. We intend to follow up with FM Bin Alawi at the earliest opportunity. End Summary.

Oman Will Support Iran Candidacy to UNHRC

¶2. (C) In a May 3 call on MFA Under Secretary Sayyid Badr al-Busaidi, Ambassador delivered USG talking points opposing Iran's candidacy to the UN Human Rights Council (reftels). The Under Secretary said that, although the Omani government is not aware of Iran's interest to run for a Council seat, should Iran do so, the Omani government would "probably" support its candidacy.

¶3. (C) The Ambassador stressed to Sayyid Badr that the inclusion of such egregious violators of human rights contributed to the ineffectiveness of the Human Rights Commission and that Iran's presence on the HRC would hinder genuine efforts to advance the cause of human rights throughout the world. The Under Secretary hinted that he hoped the new charter will be more restrictive on countries seeking to oppose substantive change, but said the Omani government must consider their historical ties and regional concerns, noting that it would be both inappropriate and ineffective to use the UNHRC as a political tool. Moreover, Sayyid Badr said that including Iran on the Council could prove to be a more effective long-term strategy for winning Iran's "responsible engagement" in international institutions.

¶4. (C) The Under Secretary confirmed that Oman is not interested in being on the Council and relayed his disappointment that the world's biggest advocate of human rights, the United States, is not competing, noting that the lack of USG participation will likely result in an ineffective council.

Comment

¶5. (C) Despite Oman's long-standing desire to better integrate Iran into the international community in hopes of tempering Tehran's unruly behavior, support for Iran's candidacy to the Human Rights Council is disturbing and difficult to understand. Sayyid Badr seemed to imply that Oman's position is not final, and the Ambassador will seek clarification with FM Yusuf bin Alawi upon his return to Muscat, sometime after the GCC mini-summit on May 6.

GRAPPO